1: Childs M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

responsible for the children, especially during their early years, but they are frequently sent 'to the *olusisa*', i.e. to the mother's brother for at least a part of their education. Herein has arisen a conflict between the claims of the paternal household and the maternal kinship group. Economic and other forces seem to have favoured the former so that 'During these days in which we stand, things have changed somewhat so that as between children and their parents, they work for their fathers for they say, "A child is strong with his *olusi* and less so with his *olusisa*." Nowadays a man teaches a child work and also looks out for his education that he may advance properly. His mother's brothers (*va isisa*) have no longer much power as of old."[1]

Bearing in mind their bilateral nature and the fact that every Ocimbundu belongs at the same time to his paternal (*olusi*) and to his maternal (*olusisa*) groups, the functions of these kinship groups may be summarized as follows:

Olusi	*Olusisa*
SOCIAL	
Consists of local residence units; succession of village and tribal offices from father to son, or elder to younger brother.	Extended family organization; office of family head descends from mother's brother to sister's son; children belong.
Marriage allowed between cross-cousins and other relatives of non-parallel descent; couple lives at groom's father's village.	*Marriage preferred* between cross-cousins and other relatives of non-parallel descent; children belong to mother's *olusisa*.
EDUCATIONAL	
Responsibility for education of young children, especially in social usage.	Responsibility sometimes assumed in later childhood, especially for technical phases.
ECONOMIC	
Ownership and inheritance of land. (Passed from father to son or elder to younger brother.)	Ownership and inheritance of more largely negotiable and movable property, as e.g. trade goods, cattle, &c. (passed from mother's brother to sister's son).

[1] Raul Kavina Evambi, *op. cit.*

1: Childs M-S (1934-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

ing to the wife all the relationships which are the husband's and vice versa. Thus by courtesy the parents-in-law are spoken of not as *odiatembo*, but *Mai* (my mother) and *Tate* (my father). The same extension also applies to all of the kin of the spouse and for all kinship terms both direct and reciprocal. Another reason for this is the mutual respect which is a principal basis of the Umbundu marriage.[1]

There remains one important matter necessary to an understanding of the Umbundu concept of relationship by marriage. To the Ovimbundu the proper, or at least the most desirable, marriage is a marriage within the circle of kin. 'Formerly people never married unless they were related, that is to say, unless they touched the blood together. If in the mother's kin (*kolaina*), only on the side of the bow (i.e. male line). If in the father's kin (*kolase*), only on the side of the basket (i.e. female line).'[2] Upon closer consideration it becomes evident which of the relatives one may marry. It would not be possible to marry any who are classed as brother, sister, father, mother, grandparent, child, or grandchild, for such a union would involve incest (*oku sala*). The relatives whom one may marry are, then, those of one's own age-level who belong to classes other than the above-mentioned. An ideal mate of one's own generation is a cross-cousin classed as *Epahume* or *Cepua* (Class A. 4, p. 47). Beside this, a woman may marry one classed as her mother's brother (Class D. 3, p. 48), and a man one classed as his father's sister (Class D. 4, p. 48), if of appropriate age. One may also marry an *ocimbumbu* (Class J. 2, p. 49). Hambly remarked that 'cross-cousin marriage . . . is the functional form among the Ovimbundu'.[3] This is true, but only in part, for not only are there many relatives other than his cross-cousin whom an Ocimbundu may marry, but the financial arrangements are quite other than those usually associated with the cross-cousin marriage.

[1] While I do not pretend to believe that 'respect' is the only or even the main reason for the observances described, it seems sufficiently important to receive the attention which I have given it.

[2] Verbatim translation of statement by Liholoto Samikanjo, elder of the school village at Ngando (Kasonge).

[3] Hambly, op. cit., p. 194. In reporting the replies of his informant as to whom he could marry, with regard to the marriage of father's sister's daughter, the reply was that it was possible but not desirable 'because the children will be stupid'. The reason assigned was evidently taken from European ideas, but the reply also indicates a preference for marriage within the clans, which I have also had from many but not from all informants.

1: Childs M-S (1924-1949) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

582 Cross-cousin marriage of the type practised by the Sotho[1] or Venda[2] tribes is quite foreign to Umbundu life. It is possible that the Ovimbundu formerly had some such type of cross-cousin marriage, but not for a very long time. Among the seventy-five schedules which I have collected illustrating marriage arrangements there are a few describing marriages which took place about ninety years ago. Magyar also wrote of the financial arrangements made for marriage in Viye about 1850.[3] Both of these sources, together with native tradition, indicate that, at least with regard to the financial arrangements, the cross-cousin type of marriage has not been practised by the Ovimbundu for more than one hundred years. On the other hand, the Ovimbundu know nothing of the exogamous marriage demanded by the Herero,[4] the Zulu,[5] &c. The Umbundu ideal includes marriage with a cross-cousin, but also goes out into the wider kinship group, as does the type of marriage of the Thonga,[6] which in turn is linked with that of the Ndau and the Shona group.[7]

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The Umbundu principle that only 'those whose blood has touched', or who can 'count' relatives in common, has for a very long time admitted of liberal application. There are cases on record of individuals belonging to regions as widely separated as Ciyaka and Ngalangi contracting marriage *after* having properly 'counted' their common relationship. These cases refer to grandparents of the present generation. It is probable that the diverse racial and cultural elements which have fused to form the Ovimbundu people long ago made imperative the broadening of the cross-cousin type of marriage to the 'ideal' or 'classic' form of (present) Umbundu tradition. An analogous process (with modifications) has continued to operate until to-day this very ideal of marriage within the kinship group is losing its hold in favour of yet more 'liberal' practices.

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In summary, the Umbundu terminology for the relative by marriage and also the connexion between the ideas of relation by marriage and relation by blood may be seen by the following:

[1] W. M. Eiselen, 'Preferential Marriage: Correlation of the various modes among the Bantu of South Africa', *Africa*, 1928, pp. 413–28.
[2] H. A. Stayt, *The Bavenda* (London, 1931), chaps. xi and xv.
[3] Magyar, op. cit., p. 282 f.
[4] Vedder in Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., p. 187; Irle, op. cit., p. 89.
[5] Krige, op. cit., pp. 34–5. [6] Junod, op. cit., vol. i, pp. 253–64.
[7] Hoernlé in Shapera, op. cit., p. 93 f.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

601 III. TABLES OF RELATIVES WITH WHOM MARRIAGE IS PREFERRED

A. *Of Ego's Generation: Either Man or Woman*

Term	*Relationship*	*Reciprocal term*
Epalume or cepua	cross-cousins of all degrees (see list Table I. A. 4, p. 47)	*epalume or cepua*

B. *Of First Ascendant Generation: Man Speaking*

Tatekãi	father's 'sister' (see list Table I. D. 4, p. 48)	*ocimumbo*

C. *Of First Ascendant Generation: Woman Speaking*

Mamu	mother's 'brothers' (see list Table I. D. 3, p. 48)	*ocimumbo*

D. *Of First Descendant Generation: Man or Woman Speaking*

Ocimumbo	mother's 'brother's' or father's 'sister's grandchild'	*mamu* or *tatekãi*

591 582 Many writers have noted that, among other purposes, the financial arrangements serve to give the bride a status in the village of her husband. In a system of preferential kinship marriage, this is a desideratum, although for other reasons than those operating in a system where the wife comes as a comparative stranger. In a system such as this of the Ovimbundu, it is evident that many of the relatives by marriage are already blood relatives. This is perhaps one reason why the avoidances with regard to 'in-laws' are less rigidly held to than in a society such as the Zulu, which holds strictly to exogamous marriage.[1]

182 601 Another factor which makes for stability of marriage is the bilineal kinship system (*epata*). This system offers to the wife an initial security not usually found where descent is unilineal, or even where there has been a one-sided development of one line of descent at the expense of the other. The bilineal system is an important factor in the preservation of social stability. Through it the household and the village are links in the chain which even yet binds the Ovimbundu into a social whole.

Sorcery

182 194 Umbundu society is subject to various forces which threaten its cohesion and stability both from without and from within. Some of the external forces have been touched upon.[2] Chief of the

[1] Krige, *op. cit.*, p. 29 f. [2] *Supra*, pp. v, 26.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

182 621 in a somewhat decadent state, the Umbundu village has up to the present maintained its status as a local kinship unit.

182 592 602 The household is not a solitary unit but a part of the village. Since it is constituted by marriage, it embodies the union of at least two kinship groups. The attitudes and behaviour patterns within the Umbundu household are basically those universally recognized. In common with the households of most Bantu cultures, it differs from the European model in that it extends its attitudes and behaviour patterns to the wider kinship groupings by means of a classificatory system of relationship.

613 182 In the wider kinship groupings (*epata*), the Ovimbundu recognize both the maternal (*olusina*) and the paternal (*olose*) lines of descent. The functions of the latter have been largely local, residential, social, and religious, with succession (of status) in the male line. The function of the former has been cohesive over a larger territory, with a recognized head in whom has been vested both religious and economic functions. Both his office and the inheritance of property descend in the female line. Much of the power, economic and personal, formerly held by the *olusina*, in the person of the mother's brother, seems to be passing at the present time to the *olose*, in the person of the father. The bilineal kinship system has been a strongly cohesive social force.

182 [582] The form of marriage practised by the Ovimbundu is of the two-way cross-cousin type in both lines of kin and in three generations. It seems to be an individual type developed in the particular social and economic situation of the Ovimbundu. As a contract between two families and as a new venture, the marriage relation demands that great attention be given to attitudes and behaviour patterns which emphasize mutual respect.

[561] The hierarchy of age is a very real factor in the Umbundu social structure. Age-set 'schools' have not existed generally throughout the tribes, but there are associations of coevals. This is largely a cohesive force.

754 Sorcery is the most important disruptive force at work *within* Umbundu society. Working as it does, within kinship groups, and inasmuch as it seems to be on the increase, sorcery embodies a real danger to social cohesion.

184 178 Homogeneity has never been an attribute of the Ovimbundu as regards their racial or cultural make-up. The slave-trade injected other and more diverse elements, and recent movements and

1: Childs M-S (1924-1960) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

chiefly for marriage. Indeed, marriage is the beginning of adulthood; no Ocimbundu is considered fully an adult until married.

Where the initiation camps have not taken hold, i.e. among the great majority of the people, it is the father's sister (*apahãi*) whose duty it is, at least in theory, to tell her brother's daughter how she should take care of herself during the times of menstrual flow. Actually a girl generally learns such things from observation and from girls of the immediately superior age-group, her sisters and cousins. She will not need to be told that during those times a girl or woman must not even touch anything belonging to a man and especially she must have nothing to do with preparing his food. This period is known as 'sitting on the ground' (*oku tumãlã poti*) since that is what a woman is supposed to do at that time. Modern usage has also taken that phrase to mean 'unemployment'.[1]

In the house which the boy or young man has built for himself, one of the most characteristic customs of adolescence among the Ovimbundu takes place: the trial marriage. There are several Umbundu names for this custom, as *oku tumina* (lit. to cause to send), referring to the fact that the young man sends a male friend or relative both to ask permission of the girl's mother and also to bring the girl each night to his hut. Names for the correlative but all-inclusive custom are *uponji*, the girl being called *eponji*; and *uvaisi*, the girl being called *ombaisi*. A young man may first *tumina* at about seventeen to eighteen years of age, but he must have acquired enough to make small presents to the girl and to her parents and he must have or have in prospect money or goods sufficient to make the betrothal payment.[2] This payment is known as *itambelo*, 'enticements', or *oku lapula ikuelume*, 'chasing away jealousies'. This indicates that the custom of *uvaisi* is definitely regarded as a prelude to marriage. For this reason, the term 'trial marriage' is preferred to that of 'premarital sexual intercourse'. The nature of the intercourse, moreover, is carefully circumscribed. 'When the respective parents have agreed, then those of the girl will warn her saying, Should that boy be bad, and want to play with your cloth, even though it be late at night, run away.'[3] In such a case the boy's parents would take him to task and require that for the time being he sleep in their kitchen and so under

[1] For early notice of this cf. Magyar, op. cit., p. 284.

[2] From 10,00 to 30,00 *Angolares* according to locality, family, status, &c.

[3] From a manuscript dictated by R. Kalupetoka of Ngalangi.

1: Child M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

observation, and not in his own house. During that time he will not be allowed to *tumina*. Or again, 'the girl's parents may warn her saying, Should the boy try *to sting*[1] you, do not let him: do not stay, but run away.'[2] All informants stress the point that the chief purpose of the custom is that the two young people may come to know each other as well as possible with marriage in view. There are severe sanctions against premarital pregnancy; fines to be paid by the young man or his family, lessened desirability for the girl in marriage, and a distinction in the ceremony between brides who are virgin and those who are not. Proofs of virginity are required on the marriage morning. Those families and regions which have girls' initiation camps include in the procedure a test of virginity.[3] There are not the periodic tests of virginity which are found among the Zulus, Mpondos, &c.,[4] but the Ovimbundu do not expect that the contact will be as close as these other tribes evidently do.[5] The closest parallel which I know is with the (American) colonial custom of 'bundling'.

It is said that the custom of *upoji* has been in a decadent state for a long time. This is not only because of its having been misunderstood and forbidden by the church or the missions.[6] Although this is partly the case, the chief difficulty came from the time of the rubber trade (1874–1900) when young men began without ceremony to go to the kitchens to sleep with girls instead of properly arranging matters. Whether their affluence made them reckless (i.e. of expected fines, &c.), or whether they were aping Europeans or the customs of other tribes, is not known. At any rate, it is said that for large numbers of people this put an end to propriety. Numbers of Europeans began to settle in the country from 1891 (Viye) and 1903 (Bailundu and elsewhere), and from then until now casual relations have very greatly increased year by year.[7] That the Ovimbundu have held to their traditional forms

[1] *Lamuna*, euphemism for *tumisisa*.
[2] From a statement by R. Kavita Evambi of Ciyaka.
[3] A pullet's egg is used for the test (manuscript by R. Kavita Evambi).
[4] Krige in Schapera, 1937, *op. cit.*, p. 110 f.
[5] Among the songs which I have collected are two sung by girls to tease the young men and with references to nights spent in *upoji*.
[6] *Uvuisi* has been used in translations for 'fornication' or 'adultery' and used so persistently that it has now nearly come to have those meanings. The *Umbundu–English Vocabulary* (1911) gave a correct definition for *upoji* but not for *upoji*; its references to *onduisi* and *uvuisi* are likewise in error, while *tumisa* is not listed.
[7] Information from R. Kahupetaka and others.

1: Childs M-5 (1934-1940) 1940 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

The extent to which the order of the *vakuaciosolo* exists at present or has existed among the Ovimbundu would be a very interesting subject of inquiry. It is certain that the institution does not exist throughout the territory but only in certain families which belong to the order and pass on membership in it by heredity. Whether there are certain regions where it is or was in the past more strongly held to is not known. It seems to be or to have been more strongly entrenched among the cattle-rearing people to the south, but it is also said to have been practised in Lupolo (Libolo) and even in the region of Luanda.[1] Among the Ovimbundu it seems to have been stronger in the past than at present. Few if any practising members of the set are now known. All 'coevals' or members of the set were in duty bound to render mutual assistance. All had mutual rights to the property of the others without complaint or remedy. These mutual rights seem to have been extended to the extreme limit of having intercourse with each other's wives, nor did the injury or even the death of one brought about by another allow the injured family to seek revenge or legal redress. It was the duty of *vakuaciosolo* to bury their fellows, themselves digging the grave and attending to all expenses not already supplied by the family. Theirs was also the duty of burying strangers without family who would not be buried by others fearing defilement or responsibility for their debts. Bastos gives a tradition ascribing the origin of this institution to a wager laid between two chiefs.[2] It seems more probable, however, that it is connected with circumcision and tribal initiation. An analogous set of rights and duties is said to have existed among the Herero between 'coevals' circumcised at the same time.[3]

Tribal initiation for both boys (*oku lisesa evumbu*) and girls (*uso wokuli*) is carried on in camps or 'schools' in the southern and south-eastern tribes of the Ovimbundu. These camps are regularly held in Kalukembe, Kakonda, and Ngalangi. Sporadic instances of individual camps have also occurred recently in Viye, Bailundu, Sambu, Wambu, Cingolo, and Cikuma. Even in those regions where camps are regularly held, only the children of certain families enter. It seems that there has been some passing on of the custom by heredity and, in general, there is intermarriage only between families and individuals who adhere to the initiation

[1] Bastos, 1909, op. cit., pp. 67–70.
[2] Ibid., p. 69 f.
[3] Vedder in Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., p. 178.

1: Childs M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

had Portuguese names, and tradition speaks of a great accession of mulatto stock, which also is confirmed by observation.

The Umbundu-speaking border groups are interesting. Ngamba was formerly occupied by the Songo and has been peopled by Ovimbundu coming from near the capital of Viye only within the past forty years. Cengi, Sanga, Namba, and Kasongi on the northern flank of Bailundu have probably all only recently become Umbundu-speaking groups. Kasongi is one of the largest groups which paid tribute to Bailundu, and has had a line of Umbundu-speaking kings for more than a hundred years; but judging from genealogical evidence the bulk of the people have not been Ovimbundu that long. Civula is another large group and its uncertain feudal status has been noted. Perhaps the most interesting of the border groups, at least from a linguistic standpoint, is Kalukembe. The royal house seems to have come from Ciyaka and it has been claimed that in Kalukembe the kingship is inherited by the mother's brother's son. This is not supported by the only local traditional history which I have been able to secure and requires further investigation. At any rate it is through the maternal line that the commoners of all the Umbundu-speaking groups inherit, and it is noteworthy that this is also true of the kingship among the 'Bangala' and the Ambo tribes.[1] The 'Bangala' people have clan organizations and are exogamous, so that they may marry in any of the related 'Bangala' groups, and for this purpose they include the Kalukembe but not others of the Ovimbundu.[2] Finally, the variations with which Umbundu is spoken in Kalukembe[3] point to closer connexions with the language-group of the 'Bangala'. There are certain areas which at the present day seem to be undergoing a linguistic 'Umbundu-ization'. This is most evident in the coast towns such as Novo Redondo, Lobito, Catumbela, Benguela,

[1] See Estermann, 'Notas Etnográficas sôbre os povos do Distrito da Huila' in *Boletim Geral das Colónias*, fev. 1935, p. 63; Hahn, *et al.*, *The Native Tribes of South West Africa*, p. 8.

[2] This last item was learned from Mulondo people. The above-cited article deals only with the people of the District of Huila, while 'Bangala' people live also in other adjoining districts.

[3] Compare Umbundu language work of H. Chatelain and others of the 'Mission Philafricaine' in Kalukembe, as versus illustrations of Umbundu used by Johnston, Meinhof, *et al.* Evidently the native 'Mohongo' taken to Paris by Homburger of the Mission Roban-Chabot, was a native of Kalukembe, for the 'Bailundu' vocabulary taken from him is of the Kalukembe variation. (See *Mission Roban-Chabot*, v. III, f. 1.)

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Magyar's account of the Viye legend is of interest since it suggests a direct link between the movements of the Ovimbundu ancestors and contemporary migrations of the Lunda in the Congo basin and western Angola.(1) Magyar relates that the forefathers of the Viye came from the land of the Muropa (or Lunda(2)) under the two chiefs Kinguri and Schakambindi, conquered the Songo, and settled on the Luando river, engaging in agriculture between raids. The tribe subsequently sub-divided, one group going southwards to the Kukema river, where Ngangela were living, to found the chiefdom of Viye.

Ngalangi tradition is the only one which attempts a creation myth. Feti, the first chief of Ngalangi, is said to have "come down from above"; having no wives, he went to a lagoon of the Kunene river and caught them as they came out of the reeds. Sona of Feti drove out the Ngangela from what is now Ngalangi country, and founded their principal village.(3) Childs estimates that this must have taken place in about 1750. The village was later attacked unsuccessfully by Ngangela, and this is one of the very few traditions which mention resistance met by the invaders.

Wambu. The first chief, Wambu Kalunga, is said to have come from Sele country, north-west of Bailundu. The Nganda, who now live south-west of Umbundu country and are of Southern Bantu stock, were previously living in Wambu country. The founder of the Ciyaka royal family is said to have been a relative of Wambu Kalunga, and to have driven out the Nkumbu (also of Southern Bantu stock) from Ciyaka country, probably during the first half of the seventeenth century. Wambu Kalunga is said to have been also the progenitor of the dynasties of *Cingolo, Citeta* or *Cikuma, Kalukembe, Elendo* and *Ekekete*.(4)

Kakonda, the founder of the Kakonda kingdom, was of northern stock, but born in Ngalangi, whence he was sold as a slave to Benguella. He escaped with his wife, Cilombo, and set up the present kingdom in about 1760.

Cengi, Sunge, Nimbo and *Kasongi* on the northern flank of Bailundu have only recently become Umbundu-speaking. *Kasongi*, one of the largest Bailundu tributaries, has however had a line of Umbundu-speaking chiefs for more than 100 years. *Civulo* was listed by Magyar as tributary to Ciyaka. *Kalukembe* is of interest in that it is more clearly linked than other sections of the Ovimbundu with the Nganda-Ambo group. Factors which point to this closer link include: the similarities in language between the two groups; the inheritance of the Kalukembe kingship in the maternal line, as among the Nganda-Ambo group, and not in the paternal line, as among other Ovimbundu;(5) and the fact that the Nganda-Ambo, who have an exogamous clan organization, may marry in any of the related Nganda-Ambo groups, and for this purpose include Kalukembe but not other Ovimbundu.(6)

(1) McCulloch 1951, *op.cit.*, 1951., 1952.
(2) Dias de Carvalho 1890, p.66.
(3) According to the same legend, where the Ngalangi rested their loads of food and household goods, sticks took root and became the sycamore figs which to this day encircle the capital village. This circle of trees is a characteristic of the older Ngangela villages.
(4) Childs *op.cit.*, pp.178, 225.
(5) Although descent among Ovimbundu commoners is in the maternal line.
(6) Childs, *op.cit.*, p.179.

dispersed. Both groups have ritual leaders, whose offices are quite distinct. Barnes' suggestion[1] is that the two groups must be father's patrilineage and mother's matrilineage, with the qualification mentioned below.

The *olusa* consists of a large number of village groups, some of which recognise mutual relationship,[2] but with no recognised head (other than the village headmen) except in the case of the royal families. Land is owned by the *olusa* and passed on within it from father to son, or from elder to younger brother. Succession to village or tribal office, from village headman to king, descends in the same way.[3] Ritual leadership within the *olusa* lies with the village headman, who is in charge of the spirit-hut *(etumbo)* of the guardian spirit of the village (or of the nuclear *olusa* within the village), and who officiates at regular village worship, including agricultural festivals.

The *oluina*, on the other hand, is a dispersed and apparently larger group, whose members live with their various paternal lines of descent. The size of the *oluina* is unknown; Childs merely refers to it as a "large and widespread organization, with a recognised head". The office of head of the *oluina (ukulu wepata)* descends from mother's brother to sister's son. Negotiable and moveable property, including cattle and trade goods, is owned by the *oluina* and inherited by the sister's son. Formerly the mother's elder brother had great powers over his sister's sons, and was even able to pawn them or sell them into slavery, to meet his own debts. The patrilocal household is usually responsible for training children, especially during their early years, but they are frequently sent to the *oluina* (i.e. to the mother's brother) for at least a part of their education. At death or divorce of parents, children go to the *oluina*.

The head *(ukulu wepata)* of the *oluina* is usually both the legal and spiritual head of the group, although today the two functions are often divided. He is in charge of the spirit hut *(etumbo)* of the guardian spirit of the *oluina* (of whom there may be more than one, and of whom he becomes one after death). He leads the *oluina* in propitiatory rituals carried out in case of illness, death, or other misfortunes within the group, or in prayers made for desired economic advantages. (Apparently no regular rituals are carried out by the *oluina*.) The *ukulu wepata* may or may not be at the same time a village headman; if he is, he will be priest of two lines and have charge of two spirit huts; if he is not, there may be two (or more) priests in the village, each in charge of the spirit-hut of his *olusa* or *oluina*.

The onZIZ yohanji and the onZIZ yohumbo

The *olusa* and the *oluina* are both divided into male and female "sides": the *onZIZ yohanji* (the side of the bow) and the *onZIZ yohumbo* (the side of the basket). It has been noted above that uterine brothers and sisters belong to the same *olusa* and *oluina*, but to the male or female side in each, according to sex. The composition of these "sides" is

(1) Loc.cit.
(2) If some villages within the *olusa* cannot trace mutual relationship, the *olusa* should perhaps be called a patri-clan rather than a patrilineage.
(3) But see below, p.29.

however not at all clear. They seem to group simply all the male members and all the female members of the olase and of the olaine; but this conflicts with the information given on marriage.(1) A man may marry into the male side of his mother's kin or into the female side of his father's kin. Hence there must be some women in the male side, and, presumably, some men in the female side. A man cannot marry a parallel cousin, but he may marry:

(a) a father's sister. She presumably belongs to the female side of the olase, which presents no difficulty.

(b) a sister's daughter. She appears to belong to the female side of ego's mother's kin, while a man should marry into the male side of his mother's kin.

(c) a female cross-cousin. If the olase and the olaine were merely father's patrilineage and mother's matrilineage, as has been suggested, cross-cousins are excluded from both groups. In a footnote,(2) however, Childs seems to imply that mother's brother's daughter belongs to ego's mother's kin. Parsons therefore suggests that children of men of the matrilineage may be included in the olaine, falling into the male side irrespective of sex, and similarly the olase may include in the female side all the children of women of the patrilineage. By this hypothesis:

(a) a sister's daughter would fall into the female side of ego's olase.

(b) a mother's brother's daughter would fall into the male side of ego's olaine.

(c) a father's sister's daughter would fall into the female side of the olase.

The descent system: summary

The descent system suggested may then be summarized thus:

(1) olase (father's kin)

(a) *omlil yohonji* (male side): all men in the patrilineage.

(b) *omlil yohumbo* (female side): all women in the patrilineage, and all sons and daughters of women in the patrilineage.

(2) olaine (mother's kin)

(a) *omlil yohumbo* (female side): all women in the matrilineage.

(b) *omlil yohonji* (male side): all men in matrilineage, and all sons and daughters of all men in the matrilineage.

According to this hypothesis every person belongs to four distinct groups. A man must belong not only to the male side of the two groups centred in the father's patrilineage and the mother's matrilineage, but also to the male side of his father's matrilineal group and to the female side of his mother's patrilineal group. There are still only two systems

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.58. (2) P.58, fn.3.

of groups, but a man belongs to two groups within each system. Similar membership is required for a woman. A man shares with all his children his membership of the male side of his mother's matrilineal group, and shares with his sons membership of the male side of his father's patrilineal group. His daughters belong to his father's patrilineal group but to its female side. He does not transmit to his children membership of his father's matrilineal group or his mother's patrilineal group.(1) This is illustrated by the diagram on page 21.

Kinship terminology

Patterns of behaviour between all blood relatives find their prototypes in the household. The following list of kinship terms is selected from the more detailed list given by Childs.(2)

Term		Reciprocal
mai	mother, mother's sister, etc.	ocolonge
tate	father, father's brother, etc.	ocolonge
tatekai	("female father") father's sister	ocinamba conge
mamu	mother's brother	ocinamba conge
kuenonge	older brother or sister, and male or female parallel cousin, if older than ego	wanjonge
kuto ~ /epolume /upolume /cipue	eldest brother (of family or household)	wanjonge
	male or female cross-cousin	epolume, upolume, or cipue
mukai	sister or female parallel cousin (M.S.)	mume
ebuale	" " " " (F.S.)	ebuale
mukulu	grandmother, grandparents' sister	mukulu yonge
sekulu	grandfather, grandparents' brother	mukulu yonge

Note: (a) There is no word used exclusively for "brother" by a man, although a woman may use mume in this sense. Kuenonge and wanjonge are used by either men or women for older or younger brothers or sisters.

(b) mukulu and sekulu are sometimes used interchangeably for persons of either sex.

MARRIAGE

Marriage within the kin group

The most desirable marriage is marriage within the circle of kin, i.e. (as noted above) into the male line of the clains or the female line of the olupe. (There appears to be a preference for marriage within the olaine.(4)) One may not marry one classed as brother, sister, father, mother, grandparent, child or grandchild, for such a union would involve

(1) This paragraph is largely quoted from Bascom, loc.cit.
(2) pp.47-9.
(3) M.S. = man speaking, W.S. = woman speaking.
(4) Childs, op.cit., p.18, note 8.

582 incest (oku suka). But one may marry relatives of one's own age-level who belong to classes other than those mentioned, i.e. cross-cousins and, on other age-levels, father's sister or sister's daughter. It is said that formerly marriage never took place except between persons who could trace relationship in this way. Today this principle is very liberal in its application.(1) (It would be interesting to have estimates of the number of men who do marry first degree cross-cousins, father's sisters, or sister's daughters, as distinct from classificatory relatives of these classes, and the number who marry outside the olusa or olusa.)

583 Marriage was formerly arranged by the mother's brother (i.e. by the olusa), but today there is a tendency for fathers to arrange their daughters' marriages and to receive their marriage payment. (And also, occasionally, to assist their sons in providing marriage payment.)(2) *Ilambo*, or marriage payment, was formerly paid in cattle, blankets etc.(3) Today it is usually paid in cash, the amount being determined by the status of the bride.(4)

Polygyny

591 595 In the sample village (Ngendo, Kasongi chiefdom) described by Childs, of a total of 48 households,

(a) 10 households were polygynous; of these 9 contained only 2 wives or concubines, and the tenth, that of the headman, contained four wives and one concubine,

(b) 27 households were monogynous, and 3 more were occupied by widowers, all formerly monogynous. (The remaining households were occupied by 7 widows and one young unmarried man.)

Childs notes that the proportion of polygynous households in Kasongi chiefdom is probably higher than in other parts of Ovimbundu country for two reasons: the comparatively low marriage-payment in Kasongi as compared with other areas, and the proximity of Kasongi to Esele country, which has long been a source of supply for slave concubines. (Of the 10 polygynous households in Ngendo 5 contained at least 1 Esele concubine.)(5)

Avoidance between in-laws

602 Mutual respect (*esumbilo*) between the two kin groups involved is considered a necessary basis for a successful marriage, and is the reason given for the various avoidances (*oku liyuvula*) enjoined upon the principals and their respective relatives. These avoidances may be summarised:-

573 (a) A husband and wife must avoid using each other's names.

601 (b) The term *ukisanku* is used for parents-in-law of either sex, and reciprocally for sons-in-law or daughters-in-law. The term is extended to all those whom one's spouse calls "mother", "father" or "child" (Childs, p.52) and apparently also to those whom one's spouse calls sons, tarekai or

(1) Childs, p.54.
(2) Passim, 1945.
(3) Cashmore, 1944, p.65.
(4) Childs, personal communication.
(5) Childs, page 30.

and young manhood, and to which he will bring his wife. In this house a kind of trial marriage (*eponji*) takes place. The young man will *oku tumisa* ("cause to send") a male friend to ask permission of a girl's mother and also to bring her to his house each night. The girl is called *eponji*. (The custom may also be called *uveisi*, the girl *onveisi*.) A young man may first *tumisa* at about seventeen or eighteen years, if he has sufficient money or goods to make the "betrothal" payment (*itambelo* - "enticements" or *oku lapula thuelume* - "chasing away jealousies"). The amount of the payment (which is made to the girl's parents) varies with locality, wealth and status, but is usually about one tenth of the amount of the marriage payment proper. The amounts of both payments are increasing rapidly.(1) The nature of the intercourse is carefully circumscribed, and the girl is warned by her mother not to let intromission take place. Proofs of virginity are required on the marriage morning, and there are severe sanctions against premarital pregnancy. Childs' informants stressed that the chief purpose of the custom is that the two young people should get to know each other as well as possible with marriage in view. Ennis however(2) states that *uveisi* does not necessarily lead to marriage and may be entered upon without the intention of marriage; the girl may leave the man if she does not like him, and if the *uveisi* is broken off both may marry other persons without any difficulties.

INITIATION(3)

Tribal initiation for boys (*oku liseviso evanbo*) and girls (*uso vakai*) is carried on in camps or "schools" in the southern and south-eastern Umbundu chiefdoms, especially in Kalukembe, Kakonda, and Ngalangi. Sporadic instances of individual camps have also occurred recently in Viye, Bailundu, Sambu, Wambu, Cingolo and Cikuma. Even in regions where camps are regularly held, only the children of certain families enter. There appears to have been some passing on of the custom by heredity, and, in general, there is intermarriage only between families and individuals who adhere to the initiation rites. It is not known whether the rites have been taken over by the Ovimbundu from neighbouring peoples, or whether they represent a custom formerly widespread in Umbundu country. Initiation camps are not mentioned by the earlier writers.

Childs gives little information about what goes on in initiation camps, apart from pointing out that in making a definite break from the routine of life they contrast with other aspects of Umbundu education, and that "the hardship and cruelty of initiation camps have their parallel in the trading and slave-raiding expeditions of the past." His statement that "as an 'educational institution' [the initiation camps] do not seem to fit into the culture" is not very clear. From the few details given by Hambly(4) Umbundu camps appear to be identical with those of the tribes to the east, and here one of the most important aspects of the camps is their ritually-emphasised contrast with regular life.(5)

(1) Childs, personal communication.
(2) 1945.
(3) Childs, op.cit., pp.115-7.
(4) (2) 1934, pp.224f.
(5) See McCulloch, 1951, pp.85-91.

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Vakuacisoko (lit. "those of the set") (1)

Childs considers that the custom of *vacuacisoko* is probably connected with circumcision and initiation. It does not exist throughout the territory but only in certain families who belong to the order and are said to pass it on by heredity. It seems to have been stronger in the past, but few practising members of the set are now known. All 'coevals' or members of the set were in duty bound to render mutual assistance, and all had mutual rights to the property of the others without complaint or remedy. These rights seem to have included that of having intercourse with each other's wives. Injury or even death of one member brought about by another did not allow the injured family to seek revenge or legal redress. It was the duty of the *vacuacisoko* to bury their fellows, themselves digging the grave and attending to all the expenses ordinarily supplied by the family of the deceased. They also had the duty of burying strangers without family who would not be buried by others for fear of defilement or responsibility for their debts.(2) Childs describes the *vacuacisoko* associations as "age-grade sets",(3) but gives no further explanation.

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"With or without initiation rites, adolescence is largely preparation for marriage and full adult life. Traditionally, adolescence is not a time of conflict or stress....Contract and *corvée* labour have brought profound changes, especially for the young men. As for the girls, a few have gone into the towns; relatively few, however, other than those who attend a boarding-school, lead a life essentially different from that which has been traditionally theirs."(4)

MARRIAGE

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Available information concerning degrees of relationship in which marriage is permitted, marriage-payment, polygyny and divorce has been given above.(5) Evambi(6) and Hambly(7) describe some of the customs and ceremonies connected with marriage.

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For three nights after the commencement of the marriage ceremony the girl sleeps with her own parents, while the married woman and six unmarried girls whom she has chosen as her attendants sleep in the house of her husband. On the fourth day she moves to the man's house, bringing her cooking utensils. For the first month, according to Hambly, or, according to Evambi, the first year, i.e. until the grain is ripe in her new fields, she lives with her husband's mother or aunt, in whose kitchen she cooks food each night to send to her husband in the *onjango*. When her first child is two or three months old, a present of a pig passes from the girl's mother to her husband.

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Childs(8) adds that adulthood comes with marriage, and marriage is only recognised as complete when the first child has been born. A child or an adolescent is only a "potential" person *(omunu)* and the permanency

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.115.
(2) Those who buried a man were considered responsible for his debts. Hence corpses were often placed in trees.
(3) Childs, op.cit., p.59.
(4) Ibid., p.117.
(5) Pp.20f.
(6) 1938.
(7) 1934, pp.180f.
(8) Op.cit., pp.119-20.

VI. SOCIAL LIFE

Sexual Relations

COURTSHIP

There is a certain humor and quaintness of language used by Ngonga in describing sexual relations of the Ovimbundu. So far as possible the interpreter's style of expression has been preserved because of its value in revealing the native attitude. 584 836

When a man begins to like a girl, he looks at her for several days. Perhaps the boy will talk to the girl who will tell him to go to her father and mother. The boy must ask the parents for a friendship, which may last for one or two years. During this time the boy must not do anything to the girl, and if he tries she ought to tell her parents. If a baby were born to them in this time it would be a shameful thing. After the boy has told the parents that he wishes to marry the girl he must find something to give to them. The girl must have agreed to marriage before the boy asks the parents. The first token may be no more than a ball of wax or a present of salt. This token says, "The girl is mine," and no other boy will ask for her because it is understood that she is promised to somebody. In former days there were restrictions against marriage with other tribes, but in eastern Angola at the present day the Ovimbundu occasionally marry with the Vachokue. [582

Soon the boy will start building a house on his father's plot, because he intends to bring the girl to his father's land. The boy must at this stage make a further present to the parents of the girl. In the old days he would take about five kilos of salt; but now he will take a bottle of Portuguese wine, two or three blankets, or a piece of cloth. The people who carry the present must be the brother, father, or a male cousin of the suitor. These relatives will say, "This is the day we have come for our boy's wife." Then the parents will examine the things. Perhaps they will say, "You must bring a better blanket." The father or the girl's mother's brother must call the relatives of the girl to a council (*onjango*) where the relatives of the boy and girl are gathered. 584 481

The parents say, "We are taking these things for our daughter; we hope she will be a good girl and not shame us. She is a good girl to us and we hope she will be a good girl in your house." The girl's parents turn to her and say, "We should like to hear that you are hospitable; give food to your husband's relatives when they visit you." 584 577

613 *mai* (or *oluina*) mean "family of my mother." These terms seem to indicate a bilateral rather than a unilateral lineage. Inquiry did not show that there were totems for the mother's or the father's people, or that marriage into any particular local group was com-
631 manded or enjoined. A village is a unit under the administration of a chief (*sekulu*) and as such is part of a large group of villages forming a kingdom ruled by a king (*osoma*), but such village units are concerned with government and warfare, not with exogamy.

613 In tracing descent an Ocimbundu gives the names of relatives of
565 both the father and mother, but commoners are unlikely to know the names of their relatives beyond the grandparent class. The children of a king were at one time able to recite many generations
• [582] of ancestors along both parental lines. But if the king had married a commoner, as he was allowed to do after choosing his first wife from the royal line, the children knew only the genealogy of their father. This is obvious since the commoner mother would not be likely to know her line of descent. The son of a village chief (*sekulu*) may marry a commoner, but, according to Ngonga, the *sekulu*, his father, "would have a very good look at her."

582 Ngonga had not heard of the marriage of brothers and sisters,
565 not even in the royal family; the idea of such a union was new and repulsive to him. In Umbundu society there would be no necessity for such a marriage as that of brother and sister or other close relative, because members of a royal family of one part of the country could intermarry with members of a royal family in some area far away. There might, for example, be marriages between the royal families of Bailundu and Ngalangi, which are two principal kingships of the Ovimbundu confederacy.

835 When asked what would be the fate of a man who committed
684 incest with his blood daughter or uterine sister, Ngonga said he would be killed by his brother or by his mother's brother. If he escaped he would have to go far away so that his people could never see him again. If a fine were accepted for incest, the culprit would have to pay his own kin "because he had shamed them."

601 Table A, Ngonga's Own Generation, calls attention to a plurality of terms for brother and sister according to the relative ages of the speaker and the person addressed. Moreover, there is a term for direct address and another which is used when speaking of a brother or sister.

Ngonga was questioned with regard to forms of address for his brothers and sisters other than the children of his uterine mother.

601 Table A indicates a wide use of the word *nawa* for "in laws" of the speaker's generation. Thus Ngonga calls the wives and husbands of his brothers and sisters *nawa* without distinguishing them in any way. The term *nawa* has a still wider connotation for it includes Ngonga's father's brother's son's wife, and his father's sister's daughter's husband. Ngonga's wife said that she uses the word *nawa* for all the brothers and sisters of her husband, for all the children of her husband's father's brother, her husband's father's sister's children, her husband's mother's brother's children, and her husband's mother's sister's children. Reciprocally, all these people call Ngonga's wife *nawa*.

605 582 Table A introduces the question of cross-cousin marriage, which is the functional form among the Ovimbundu. My informant said that he calls his mother's sister's children brothers and sisters, therefore he could not marry the girls. Neither are his father's brother's daughters eligible for marriage with him. The table shows the truth of this, for Ngonga calls his father's brother's daughter *mukai*, meaning "sister"; she addresses him as *kota* or *kuva* ("brother"). Ngonga also addresses his father's brother's son by the term *manjange* ("younger brother") or *kuvange* ("older brother") according to the relative ages of the speaker and the person addressed.

When Ngonga was asked whether he could marry a daughter of his mother's brother, he replied, "I could marry her very well indeed." A marriage of Ngonga with his father's sister's daughter would be permissible but Ngonga said the marriage is not regarded as a good one "because the children will be stupid." Ngonga could marry his mother's brother's daughter's daughter, or his mother's brother's son's daughter. It would also be permissible for Ngonga to marry his father's sister's daughter's daughter, or his father's sister's son's daughter.

604 601 Ngonga said, "My father's brother is my father, and my mother's sister is my mother." When questioned further my informant said that a marriage with daughters of these relatives would make him *ocinyama*, which means "an animal." Relatives would say, "You have shamed the family." It will be noted from Table B, First Generation of Ngonga's Ascendants, that Ngonga's father's brother calls him *omolange*, meaning "my child," for which the reciprocal is *tate* ("father"). Ngonga's father's brother's wife is *nai* ("mother"), and she calls him *omolange* ("my child"). Ngonga distinguishes between his mother's oldest sister (*nai yukulu*), and his mother's

5: Hambly E-5 (1929-30) 1934 FP 13 Mbundu FP13

326 merly obtained. Blacksmiths now smelt scrap-iron from European sources.
[582] Among the Ovimbundu, blacksmiths are restricted in marriage only by those kinship laws arising from their classificatory system of relationships, and the operation of a system of cross-cousin marriage. The smiths are not an endogamous group, and the occupation is not hereditary.

But despite these differences, which are not quite in harmony with the general body of custom relating to Negro blacksmiths, the Ovimbundu preserve ritual which is part of a widely distributed attitude toward workers in iron.

When a boy begins his training he should be about eighteen years of age and physically robust. He is required to collect and soften fragments of iron in the charcoal fire, to work the bellows, and to beat iron on the anvil, but for a time he is not allowed to make implements, the chief of which are hoe blades and axe heads. At the end of two years the novice asks his master to examine him, and preparations are made for an inauguration ceremony should the youth have proved sufficiently skilled to become an independent blacksmith.

326 On the day of initiation the boy has to buy four chickens, two male and
782 two female, one pup, and a goat. The master blacksmith has already made a complete set of tools for presentation to his pupil, but the big hammer (onjundo) is not quite completed until the day of initiation. While the final touches are being given to this object the novice stands still on a small stone anvil which is situated between the forge and the large anvil.

When the hammer is completed, and while it is still red hot, it is thrust into the belly of the pup provided by the novice. The goat and the four chickens are killed and some of their blood is sprinkled over the new tools which are gathered in a heap. The blacksmiths invite their friends to feast on the flesh of the sacrificed animals.

326 The boy remains standing on the anvil[1] until the master says, "You may
553 speak and tell us what name you want." Perhaps the boy says, "I am Ndumbu;" then the people clap hands and trill with their fingers in their open mouths. My interpreter said, "The boy will work hard and people will pay him. He used to work hard but his master took the pay."

326 Near the large anvil may be seen one or more wooden figures which are
778 still regarded as essential to the work of the blacksmith. I was informed that a blacksmith owes his skill to the aid of a spirit of some person he has killed, and that this spirit uses the wooden figure as a dwelling place. If this information is reliable the wooden figure is of the nature of a shrine, but I was not able to learn of any ceremony for inducing a spirit into the wooden figure. The impression left was that the spirit of the murdered person re-

[1] [i.e., on the day of initiation of apprentice blacksmith. -- Analyst]

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
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groups emerged. The information on the cult of the matrilineal spirits which might have thrown some light on matrilineal conflicts and integration, is confused. Both Hastings and Mrs. Tucker state that the matrilineal spirits are always malevolent, but this is not confirmed by my informants,[83] and it may be that they were referring to the traditional belief that sorcery was only practised between members of a matrilineal group. Although, as has been stated, a man looked to his matrilineal kin for economic aid, he might travel with his father (who had first claim on his services), or with his mother's brother or some other kinsman; indeed while his father was still alive he might travel and trade on his own account.[84] The matrilineal group (in this area at least) was not a unit from which trading teams were formed, but rather a means for providing financial assistance when needed for those engaged in trading. It is of course possible that in some areas of Umbundu country the matrilineal kin groups were significant in the organization of trading caravans.

Another institution whose form can be described but whose function cannot be properly known is that of preferential marriage with certain categories of kin. Childs states that the categories were cross-cousins (both patrilateral and matrilateral), the sister's daughter, and the father's sister, and indicates that the cross-cousin marriages were not generally with first-cousins. My informants generally denied that it had been permitted to marry a father's sister, but confirmed his other statements. They added that an indemnification was paid by the bridegroom to the bride's family 'to cut the blood',[85] and that the kinship terms were replaced by affinal. This suggests that these marriages may have been intended to restore distant kinship ties by turning them into affinal ties and so renewing them for the next generation, but how this would operate cannot even be guessed.

[83] Hastings, p. 87; L. S. Tucker, 'The Divining Basket of the Ovimbundu', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1940, pp. 171–201.

[84] Informants.

[85] This was paid down to 1949 or so in the area where I was. It was about 20 escudos, much less than bridewealth. It was formerly referred to by the Umbundu term for 'fine' (*osimbu*), as was the payment made on the death of a non-kinswoman wife.

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wife of Ernesto (6). Patrilateral 'father' to Paula (24) and Saviel (11). Affinally related to Mwehombo, a 'sister' of whom he had married.

Wayangu, paternal half-brother of Mwehombo, resident at Epalanga till the end of 1955, wife's father to Aspirante (1) had married a sister (not clear whether own or classificatory) of Lusase.

3. *Kinship and marriage in the village setting*

The foregoing tabulated information and the charts indicate the two main principles of integration in Epalanga, as in other Umbundu villages, the settling of individuals near senior kinsmen and the existence of a number of intra-village marriage ties.

For a clearer outline of village structure to appear, it is necessary to give a brief sketch of the contemporary kinship system which will be discussed more thoroughly in later chapters. This is cognatic, with little distinction between patrilineal and matrilineal kin, the elementary family being the basic household unit, the individual being permitted to settle with any category of kin, and a high percentage of preferential marriages.[1]

The right of settling where one pleases, as 'the heart chooses', is recognized even in children. Minessi, the 7-year-old son of Gonçalve (18), used generally to eat at the household of his father's sister Paulina, the wife of Joaõ (20). Gonçalve said about this to me 'He is very fond of his father's sister.'

While the traditional norm by which a man lived in his father's village is still remembered, at least by older men, a

[1] Childs (p. 56) states that it is permitted to marry a cross-cousin on either side, a sister's daughter, and a father's sister. My informants generally agreed that the marriage with a father's sister was not and had not been permitted. Marriage is not permitted with 'true' kin of these categories. Padre Feltin, the superior of the Bimbe Catholic Mission who knew of the existence of these marriages, told me that very few Umbundu marriages came within the prohibited (a prohibition removable by a dispensation) degrees of kinship laid down by the Catholic Church (that is, up to, and including, third cousins). Such marriages in the past might have been with geographically as well as socially distant kin. Childs quotes a case of a marriage arranged, after the discovery of a kinship tie, between partners living as far apart as Chyaka (Quiaca) and Ngalangi (Galangue).

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father does not exercise great authority over his grown sons even if they live in the same village, nor does their living in different villages lead to a breach in personal relations. Sapapula who told me that a man should stay in his father's village till the latter's death had four sons, none of whom lived in Epalanga. Two lived in Menga (where Sapapula had lived up to 1946) and maintained friendly contact with their father. One who lived in Cela seemed socially as well as geographically more remote, and the fourth was a labour migrant given up for lost.

The preferential marriages[1] have continued in practice when most of the other institutions of the old kinship system have disintegrated. Their function is to multiply the relationships between individuals living in a particular neighbourhood, and to limit the socio-geographical range within which marriage partners are selected. Of a sample of 121 existing marriages 87, that is 70.3%, were with cross-cousins, and only 13.7% were with non-kinswomen.[2]

Even some of the non-kin marriages fitted into the general pattern of increasing ties within a limited social field. Thus in Epalanga Jaime (19) had married Delfina, a brother's daughter to Ndjoleya. They were not kinsfolk yet this fitted in with the pattern of kin marriages in increasing links between different kinship cores in the village. Similarly Costa (26) and his wife Nakalende were not agreed (when questioned separately) as to whether they were kinsfolk, but this is not really significant since

[1] I had been inclined to interpret these marriages as functions of the relations between kin groups. Dr. Mary Douglas has suggested to me that these marriages were in the past not related to any system of kin groups but had, as at the present day, the function of multiplying the kinship ties within a limited field. I do not know of any clear evidence which could at this time settle the point.

[2] I count here as kin marriages those between *sakunjiolo*, funeral friends, who though not kinsfolk tend to be assimilated to cross-cousins in social usage. 'Cross-cousin' tends to be at the present time a blanket category, and I have repeatedly found asking men about their wife's kinship status that they would first give some other term and then change to 'cross-cousin'. [Epalume]. This explains why under present conditions the percentage of cross-cousin marriages in relation to the total number of marriages seems to be rising. Thus in 56 marriages (existing or terminated) contracted by 23 men who had taken part in the caravan trade, while the percentage of marriages with non-kinswomen was slightly smaller (12.5) the figure of marriages with cross-cousins was very much smaller (41.5) and the figure of marriages with kin other than cross-cousins, sister's daughters, and *sakunjiolo* was much higher (23 %) compared to the contemporary figure of 5%.

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512 their marriage also fits a general pattern of Umbundu marriage,
627 a choice made within a limited range joining together individuals of different kinship cores.

The multiplication of ties and their concentration within a neighbourhood by this means do not prevent a man from having kin and affines a day or two's journey away. It has earlier been indicated that the population of Epalanga was from quite a wide area. Yet the consequences of previous preferential marriages (thus Paulo and Saviel were related both patrilaterally and matrilaterally) and the trend towards the establishment of new marriage ties had created a complicated mesh of linkages that has been described within a not particularly stable village population, whose senior residents had been there for only ten years. To use again the anthropological metaphor of kinship as a network, the network can have odd strings running out quite a way, but in a village the different ties will be bound up in a knot.

602 The long-range ties (with such obvious exceptions as those
166 with kin living in cities) are not the result of the range of kin spreading wider and wider under modern conditions. The evidence of pedigrees indicates that kinship and marriage links between individuals in, and actual migration to and from Gumba and Cassongue, Cela, and Namba, date back well into the nineteenth century. There is far less evidence of connections and migration between Gumba and areas to the south and east. This geographical aspect of social relations persists at the present day.

621 It has been indicated that the high proportion of preferential marriages creates a certain local stability, since many marriages are with people living close to. Yet the basic stability lies not so much in the relative stability of a local population, but in the pattern by which links of distant kinship are changed into marriage ties and new bonds are speedily established among the fortuitously assembled population of a new village.

4. *Headmen and Kinship Cores*

622 I now turn to the other principle of village integration, the settling of individuals near senior kinsmen. In the previous

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On the village level, however, the importance of the mother's brother tie and of the tie between matrilateral 'brothers' becomes very apparent. None of Sapapula's four sons had settled in Epalanga, and his only classificatory 'son' was Gonçalve, own son to Mwehombo, Sapapula's matrilateral 'brother'. Seven household heads were sister's sons of Sapapula. This trend for matrilateral ties to predominate is marked also in Katembo and Mbunga, but less evident at Belem. Indeed, 'neo-matrilinearity' as a principle of village structure may be a general and not simply a local feature of Umbundu society, since Mr. C. M. N. White[1] has found that the settlements of Ovimbundu within Northern Rhodesia are marked by a predominance of matrilateral ties. This is referable to the contemporary kinship system in which the father-son tie is predominantly a personal one, with a limited extension of attitudes to classificatory fathers, whereas a man's relation with a mother's brother seems little affected by the question of genealogical distance. Perhaps the relations between the group of agnatic kin were so closely tied to the old village structure that when it broke up it disintegrated also the wider agnatic ties. Yet at the same time such matrilineal institutions as matrilineal inheritance and the non-repayment of loans among matrikin have weakened or disappeared.

Running counter to this principle of settling in the village of a senior kinsman who is likely to belong to one's matrikin, is the principle of cross-cousin marriage. 'If you have married your cross-cousin when your son grows up he will see a cross-cousin here, a cross-cousin there, and so he will stay.' That is, a man will stay in his father's village not simply by virtue of the father-son tie but because he will be surrounded by kinsmen. The relation between cross-cousins is one of equality and solidarity, expressed in joking and in burial services. To say that one stays in a place because one has cross-cousins at hand is to indicate an ideal of equal relations with a circle of kinsmen rather than attachment to the following of an important kinsman.

These two principles co-exist in actual social life. A man will recognize and respect a number of senior kinsmen living in his

[1] In letters.

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CHAPTER VIII

MARRIAGE

1. *The Significance of Preferential Marriage*

Informants say that it is permissible to marry a classificatory cross-cousin, are divided as to the permissibility of marriage with a classificatory sister's daughter, and generally disapprove of marriage with other kin categories, or with true kin of these two categories. Indeed, kinsfolk who marry seem usually not to have any traceable common ancestor.[1] Up to recently,[2] a man marrying a kinswoman had to pay an indemnification of, say, 20 escudos to 'cut the blood'. This changed the kin relationship into an affinal one.

It has been previously stated that preferential marriages have an important social role to play in keeping kinsfolk together and multiplying the ties of kinship and affinity. If this is to be proved, it is necessary to show what the people themselves think of preferential marriages, what proportion of the marriages are between kinsfolk, whether this proportion has decreased under modern conditions, and how it relates to the contemporary kinship system.

Several reasons may be given for choosing a cross-cousin bride. The bridewealth is likely to be lower, the girl is more likely to stay and not run away, if one cannot find another girl there will always be a cross-cousin to marry, and, old men point out, one will not be fined if a cross-cousin bride dies.

[1] This statement does not depend simply on my own information. Padre Feltin, superior of the Bimbe mission, who knew of the existence of these marriages told me that very few Umbundu marriages were between kin within the degrees of kinship prohibited (a prohibition removable by a dispensation) by the Catholic Church. Marriage with a first cousin is not infrequent both in Portugal itself and among the white Portuguese in Angola.

[2] About 1948.

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582 Another explanation, which I have quoted earlier, is that if one marries a kinswoman, one's children, when they grow up, will not leave, since they see 'a cross-cousin here, a cross-cousin there'.

All these reasons are no doubt to some extent valid. There are no fixed limits for bridewealth and no doubt some bridewealths paid in a cross-cousin marriage are higher than some paid in marriages between non-kin; however, it is generally held that a kinsman is less demanding over the question of bridewealth than a non-kinsman. There is some evidence that cross-cousin marriages are more stable than those with non-kinsfolk. The high proportion of cross-cousin marriages naturally leads to an individual tending, when considering the possibility of marriage, to think of his female kin, even though there is no individual girl whom he is expected to marry.

768 The custom of fining a man whose wife had died was noted among the Ovimbundu a hundred years ago by Ladislau Magyar; in recent times it seems to have disappeared from most of Umbundu country. Its survival in Gumba up to the last few years may be related to the links existing between Gumba and the northern non-Umbundu peoples, who apparently practise it to this day.

582 The last of the explanations given may be translated thus, 'Cross-cousin marriage means that the children will have the same individuals as both patrikin and matrikin. They will remain in their father's village, where he is living with his kin and will not be inclined to return to their matrikin.' This line of argument comes close to the 'observer' explanation previously offered that preferential marriage greatly increases the number of social relations within a neighbourhood. The Ovimbundu do not see this aspect of cross-cousin marriage, and this fits their lack of any 'model' of their own society as a whole, which is in turn a consequence of the rapid social change they have experienced. However, they do see cross-cousin marriage as increasing the number of ties which exist for an individual in his village and neighbourhood.

602 The diagrams and information contained in Chapter IV have already indicated how individuals are linked by marriage ties, and in Chapter VII the way in which brothers-in-law may

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live next to each other has been noted as a new development, impossible in the days of agnatic residence groups. It will be remembered how in listing the kinship ccres of Epalanga, Joaõ was placed among the kin of Mbati and Mwehombo with which he had become associated through his marriage to Paulina, although he had come to Epalanga through his relationship to Sapapula.

I have earlier described the preferential marriages as giving 'stability' to the kinship system and as providing a limit on the spread of affinal ties. In what does this stability consist, and how far is there really a limit?

The stability given by the marriage system is not the sum of the stability of individual marriages. Nor is it more than partially a local stability; marriages are not limited to a small geographical range, although the network of marriages between kin is very significant in local relations and even 'long distance' marriages which renew links with Cela and Namba reflect long-standing contacts of marriage and migration. The stability lies in the 'pattern' by which new preferential marriages are constantly being made.

The socio-geographical range over which wives are found does not differ appreciably from the socio-geographical range over which kin ties exist, which, as has been noted in Chapter IV[1], links Gumba strongly to Cassongue, Cela, and Namba, rather than with areas to the south and east, and this range does not seem to be expanding under modern conditions. Migrant labourers do not return to Gumba with wives from other areas. The only definite exception I knew to this rule was provided by Sawaisi, a traditional village headman, who had travelled on the caravans and had subsequently been a soldier. Stationed at Luanda he had there married three Kimbundu women with whom he returned to Gumba, where they were still living with him during my stay.

The preference for kinship marriage is not a limiting factor on marriage in the way that a rule of endogamy is, since a number of marriages occur with non-kinswomen. It is a limiting factor in the way that it gives an additional significance to kinship, since in the choice of a wife the distinction between kin and

[1] See p. 58.

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587 602 non-kin, which is not marked in ordinary social life, becomes important. Kinship marriages transform 'distant' kin ties into close affinal ties which will in the next generation become close kinship ties.

It is extremely difficult even to guess how this system operated in the past. Did the high rate of preferential marriages have the same function formerly as now? Or has the institution continued in being, while its function relative to the total society has changed? The testimony of that informant of Dr. Childs who told him that formerly all marriages were kin marriages and that patrilaterally one only married on 'the side of the basket' and matrilaterally only on 'the side of the bow'[4] has led Professor Barnes to suggest[5] that the preferential marriages functioned as links between descent groups. Both Dr. Childs and myself, however, have found that 'the side of the bow' and 'the side of the basket' are simply synonyms for '*olusu*' and '*olusina*'.[6] Moreover, my informants did not confirm his statement since they denied the right of marriage with a father's sister, and the quantitative information shows that even in the past some marriages were with non-kinswomen, and that others were with categories of kin theoretically forbidden, so that, then as now, the preferential marriages were with distant kinswomen rather than with a specific category of kin.

[114]

If, however, kinship marriages in the past operated as they now do, it is difficult to see their relation to the patrilineal and matrilineal groups. A clue to a solution is surely given by the custom of 'cutting the blood', which destroyed kinship to begin affinity. Marriages were arranged, it may be suggested, with those people who were still just kin, and who probably often were also geographically as well as socially distant so that the number of ties outside the sub-chiefdom might be increased, a matter of importance for long-distance traders. Later, Portuguese rule made travel no longer dependent on such long range contacts. Meanwhile the disintegration of the agnatic residence

[4] The exact words are 'Formerly people never married unless they were related, that is to say unless they touched the blood together. If in the mother's kin (*k'olusu*) only on the side of the bow (i.e. male line). If in the father's kin (*k'olusu*) only on the side of the basket (i.e. female line)'. See Childs, pp. 53–56.

[5] Review of Childs in *Man*, 1950, pp. 126–8.

[6] Dr. Childs was speaking to me apropos of Barnes's interpretation.

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groups began to make the socio-geographical function of these marriages no longer the renewal of ties with distant kin but the holding together of the local community no longer held in the firm framework of the old local organization.

Several explanations can therefore be given for preferential marriages. From the point of view of the man making such a marriage there are economic advantages in the probably lower bridewealth and, formerly, the avoidance of the fine payable on the death of a non-related wife. The marriage itself is more likely to be stable, and a man's children are more likely to stay with him if they have other kin close at hand. The local mobility of the Ovimbundu to some extent assists marital stability, since a bride arriving in a village may well find there other kin than her husband and his relatives, and may find such relatives helpful to her.

From an observer's view-point, preferential marriage is important on the village and neighbourhood level by multiplying social links within them. Its importance for the kinship system lies in its giving significance to the distinction between kin and non-kin and in keeping kinsfolk together without either localization of kinship groups or villages with strong headmen.

2. *Husband, Wife, and Household*

Traditionally the Ovimbundu lived chastely till marriage, and there existed sanctions in the form of fines, alterations in the marriage ceremony, and mystically caused illness, against unchastity.[7] The force of these sanctions has weakened in modern times;[8] however, many Ovimbundu remain chaste until marriage.

The age of marriage is about twenty-two for a man, and about eighteen for a girl. In Gumba there is some tendency to marry younger at about 16–17. Villagers in Epalanga ascribed this to contract labour, that is, to the necessity of a contract labourer having to have someone to cook for him. This is a point which will be considered later in reference to the wife's services to her

[7] Hastings, p. 121. Childs, p. 113.
[8] Childs, loc. cit., and fieldwork.

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582 husband. Another explanation is that this is a northern practice which has spread into Gumba.[9]

584 A young man who wishes to marry approaches the girl of his choice and asks her to marry him. He then asks her parents for their permission. The consent of both partners and of their parents is required now as in the past, though parental consent may often be evaded by running off to the towns and getting married there. After that negotiations are conducted with a senior kinsman as intermediary. Before the marriage can take
583 place, bridewealth must be paid over. It is this that gives the right to claim damages for adultery. When asked why bridewealth is paid, informants are likely to say that it compensates the father for the expense of the bringing up of his daughter.

[178] The amount of bridewealth paid has been rising. Two informants said that four yards (metres) of cloth and a bottle of rum formed the bridewealth in the time of the rubber trade. Others suggested as the bridewealth of that period a hoe and a few sleeping-mats. Alternatively seashells or even Portuguese coins, which were not then used in transactions among the Ovimbundu, were employed. These bridewealth objects were obtained from outside Umbundu country and had a certain rarity value, unlike the other objects which were very common. In the early thirties Hastings also mentioned the bridewealth as consisting of four yards of cloth, a bottle of rum, plus a kerchief given to her father's sister.[10] Money seems to have come in as a regular part of bridewealth about 1940.

When Cypriano married in 1949 Rosa, a sister's daughter, he paid 200 escudos (about £2. 10s.), a black cloth to her mother, and a small pig to her father. When Pedro Epalanga Chimbalanya married, near the Bimbe mission, in 1955 he paid 400 escudos, one cloth of six metres, a head cloth, a woman's blouse, and a bottle of rum. When in 1956 Daniel married Feliciana, a sister's daughter of Ndjoleya and his cross-cousin, he paid 400 escudos, whereas when Jose the son of Paulo married in the same year he paid 300 escudos also for a cross-cousin.

The bridewealth should be paid to the father. If however, a

[9] Explanation given by Padre Feltin.
[10] Hastings, p. 95.

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Going round the houses at night one meets in one house a man and his wife sitting together talking, in another a group of men and women sitting round a fire. This is a very definite change from traditional pattern of social life in which men and women sat in separate groups, a pattern which is still observed at funerals.[18] A man who has a case at the post is likely to take with him his wife as a witness. A husband has the right to beat his wife, and she should show respect to him. In fact wife-beating is rare, and the relationship seems from observation to be often one of mutual affection and close companionship. Informants were divided as to whether one can joke with one's wife—some people may fear that she will cease to respect her husband if he jokes with her—but conversationally an Umbundu wife often seems to enjoy an easy familiarity with her husband. A wife may occasionally go and stay with her relatives, and in the neighbourhood she may pay calls on kinsfolk, friends, or co-villagers, without her husband. This contrasts with the way the white and mulatto wives of traders follow the custom of rural Portugal by staying more or less permanently in the house.

The wife has her own fields, and her own granary. If the marriage is polygamous, each wife has her field and granary. Her husband may help her in her fields, although he also has fields of his own. The maize in the husband's granary is sold to produce money to pay tax and to buy clothing for both husband and wife, and the maize in the wife's granary is used for food. If her husband is away a woman will buy her clothes from her own granary. The cooking of maize has not only a nutritive importance but also a social one since it is considered the service, which is specifically wifely. Thus, the explanation I was given for the lower age of marriage emphasizes this—I should explain that people returning from contract labour are sent first to the post at which they were recruited and may have to do an additional fortnight's work there. 'It is because of the hardship.[19] In the past one married only when one was fully grown. Now it is necessary to have somebody who will send food to the post when you come back.' 'Perhaps,' I suggested, 'your mother

[18] Childs, pp. 32, 35.
[19] *Ohali*, a word often used with regard to administrative demands.

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could send food.' 'Perhaps your mother is dead, and she has to think of your father.' A man should not cook for himself in a village, by a rule of convention which has no sanction attached, although he may do so when away working.

Clearing fields, house-building, and thatching are men's work, as are brick-making, fishing, hunting, mat-making, sewing, and woodwork. Beer-brewing, cooking, maize-pounding, and water and firewood gathering are women's work. Men and women can work together in most forms of agriculture, sowing, hoeing, harvesting, feeding small stock and treating tobacco. The division of labour is based on ideas of what is natural and fitting, not on any sanctions, mystical or otherwise. Nor is the division always strictly observed. A man may fetch water if his wife is ill, or simply away visiting relatives, and I have seen an adolescent boy pounding out maize on a pounding-block.

A man should look after his sick wife. There is a song which is sung about the married couples of the village, each being named in turn, which tells how the husband went to the post and his wife climbed a tree to get some fruit down. She fell down and hurt herself and then wailed because there was nobody to look after her. A woman who is ill for some time will return to her kin to get better.

The husband does not attend his wife's funeral, but washes himself all over, and then has to lie down asleep, or as if sleeping, during the funeral. Grains of maize and other crops may be, but are not always, even at pagan funerals, thrown over a woman's coffin as it is taken to the cemetery. A man should leave his old home when his wife dies, although this rule is neglected nowadays, certainly by the owners of brick houses. After a year or two, a widower should *oku wonga*, pile up stones on his wife's grave, a duty which has behind it a vague mystical sanction of illness. The widow of a hunter should be buried beside her husband even though after his death she has married again.[17]

A widow may marry again about six months after the funeral. The exception to this is the *inakulu*, the chief's main wife. Formerly, it was permitted for a widow to marry her husband's

[17] A case of this occurred during my stay.

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Marriages may also be ended by the wife leaving her husband. 586
This may be the consequence of quarrels; however at times a woman may just run off without any apparent reason. Her husband may go to her kin and bring her back or may just get married again—such an episode may occur after many years of a marriage which has previously appeared happy. People 587
who have been married previously can be married again according to the pattern described previously. Middle-aged and elderly people would leave out the festivities and would just have the meal together, or simply count themselves as married by the payment of the bridewealth.

There does exist a formal ceremony of divorce in which 586
maize flour is smeared on the upper part of the face by the husband, and this will take place in the presence of representatives of the wife's kin. A man will do this when his wife has shown herself disrespectful to him or has quarrelled with his kin or her co-wife. As the Ovimbundu regard marriage as [581] being for the procreation of children, a barren wife should be, [842] they say, sent away but often in practice this is not done, if the wife is otherwise satisfactory.

Legally, the Portuguese administration recognizes both the 582
customary marriage and the Catholic marriage ceremony. The Catholic missions report to the post people who, having been married in church, then make customary marriages, and these may be subjected to such sanctions as being sent to contract labour. The Protestant church marriages are not apparently legally recognized but they are subject to the authority of the Protestant church courts which grant divorces on certain grounds. The *chefe de posto* on his annual visit to take the check on the census may get angry with polygynists, but in fact no very effective administrative action exists with regard to indigenous marriage.

The motives given for polygynous marriage are the desire 595
to have many children and (in the case of a chief) the need to have cooks to provide hospitality for guests. Large-scale polygyny is thought to be rather funny; I was told, as something amusing, that the former chief Mbati had 17 wives. Kafelo, the former chief of Gumba, had 6 wives, the highest number of continuing polygynous marriages I found. In Epalanga out of

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This strong pull towards the mother's brother is, however, marked on the level of village relationships as has been already noted. It is possible that with regard to co-operation on the domestic plane the tie between a man and his wife's full or half siblings is stronger than that with his sister's children. This argument would claim that the tie created by marriage between a man and his wife's full or half siblings is one of the strongest in the Umbundu social structure, and as a further proof (albeit not quantitively assessed) may be quoted the frequency with which two households close together turn out to belong to a man and his wife's brother.

In the first section of this chapter it was argued that the high rate of preferential marriages greatly increased the number of social ties between individuals in a neighbourhood, and brought a renewal of ties with distant kin. In this section various aspects of the relationship between husband and wife have been examined. Husband and wife co-operate economically and outside working hours may pass their evenings together. In a dispute taken to the post a man is likely to take his wife as a witness. Mystically sanctioned obligations do exist between husband and wife. While the elementary family is the main domestic type, households headed by women are also found and there is a certain amount of mobility of children between households. The tie of a man with his wife's siblings, particularly when they are children, is significant for the domestic organization of households.

Marriage is indeed the pivotal institution of the Umbundu kinship system. The preferential marriages do not link descent groups to one another; rather they bring about the local concentration of kin which makes out of many vague and insecure links a strongly-woven community in which both husband and wife can live with relatives near at hand.

Of the personal relationship between husband and wife it would be impossible to say as an anthropologist has of another African people, 'Here people looked for little in marriage. A man would turn to his sixteenth cousin twice removed before he turned to his wife.'[88] A man shares with his wife his work and leisure, is linked to her by mystical obligations which are not

[88] Elenore Smith Bowen, *Return to Laughter*, London, 1954, p. 117.

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ended by her death, and can rely on her testimony in a case. Even though adultery is reputedly frequent it is deplored and, as will be shown in a discussion of disputes, a man's hostility to another will be ascribed to thwarted lust for the latter's wife. The conjugal bond is the closest social relation that can exist between adults, and therefore the very type of personal enmity is provided by the adulterer or would-be adulterer.

I am here emphasizing the factors which strengthen the conjugal bond; at the end of the previous chapter I emphasized the strength which the brother-sister tie possessed under changed conditions. The balance between these two ties is to be seen in the way in which a man and his wife's brother are often next door neighbours and the best of friends. It may be suggested that this balance reflects the part-peasant part-proletarian condition of the Ovimbundu, the emergence of the conjugal family with its importance as the working team for the cultivation of cash crops, and the 'reshaping of' the brother-sister tie with the absence of husbands as labourers. It seems probable from the example of the substantial coffee-growers that had the Ovimbundu become full-time cultivators there would have been a strong trend towards isolated households and the weakening of the 'neo-matrilineal' pull which operates in the villages.

It is then the marriage tie which holds the vague, amorphous, kinship system together; it is against this vagueness that the marriage bond appears as the closest and most definite relation that can exist between two adults; and the change-over from trade to an economy based on wage-labour and cash agriculture has been accompanied by a transition from a double-descent kinship system to one in which the emergence of the elementary family co-exists with a certain pull towards matrilineal kin.

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by the people under Paulo's leadership on Guilherme's position. Guilherme counter-attacks by using his relationship with the post but finds himself forced to seek a reconciliation with the people of Epalanga.

The quarrel had begun with the proposed marriage of Anna, a step-daughter of Guilherme, and a member of his household, to Luciano, a son of the former chief Simbwyikoka and an inhabitant of the latter's village. Guilherme had no effective religious affiliation but Anna had been baptized as a Catholic, her godmother being Maria, the wife of Paulo. Luciano on the other hand was the elder of the Protestant catechetical school in Simbwyikoka village. Paulo therefore intervened to stop the marriage in accordance with the rule made by the Catholic missions against marriage with non-Catholics. Guilherme, angry at this, decided to pick on Pedro Nendi (see List II, p. 55) and Francisco Lyonjanga, sons of Mbati, and therefore wife's brothers to Paulo. Pedro Nendi had been at one time a Catholic catechist but had since been dismissed. Francisco was at the time of my arrival in Epalanga moving out of his village to settle near Pedro in a hamlet near the village. He worked as assistant to Abel Pinheiro, an African carpenter, who lived a little further along the road to Chicunda and who was employed by a white living elsewhere. Guilherme accordingly reported to the post that the two brothers had never gone to contract labour and got a policeman to come with an order for them to be brought to the post for contract labour. The policeman arrived and got Francisco, but Pedro was away visiting relatives at Nova Lisboa. Francisco then claimed that he was in fact employed by a white and was therefore exempt from contract labour. At that time Antonio Pires, an African priest from the *Missão Católica de Bimbe*, was visiting Epalanga as part of a tour through the villages. Accordingly, on the morning of the 16th January 1956, Francisco came to my house where the priest had been breakfasting with me, and stated his case. This action brought the dispute between Guilherme and Paulo for the first time within the sphere of a representative of the civilized community. The priest told Francisco to get a letter from his employer to the post. Francisco duly arrived at the post with a letter, but forgot to bring his